

This Week in Washington

Pombo supports family friendly tax bill

Congressman Pombo yesterday continued his long-standing opposition to the Marriage Tax Penalty by voting to approve H.R. 6, The Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act of 2001. The bipartisan measure, approved by a vote of 282-144, would benefit an estimated 97,430 children and 51,854 married couples in California's 11th Congressional District.

The legislation would provide roughly \$400 billion over 10 years in tax relief to families by increasing the child-care tax credit and fixing the marriage penalty tax. In addition, this legislation also increases the standard deduction, expands the 15 percent tax bracket, doubles the earned income tax credit for low-income families and adjusts the alternative minimum tax.

"This is family friendly legislation," Pombo stated. "Not only does it reduce the marriage penalty, but by doubling the child tax credit, we will make life much easier for stay at home parents."

Pombo supports budget putting families first

On Wednesday, Congressman Richard Pombo voted in favor of the Fiscal Year 2002 budget resolution. The budget resolution, which was approved by a vote of 222-205, is a bold, yet responsible statement that places the concerns of hard-working families ahead of the concerns of Washington bureaucracy.

"This is a responsible budget that brings common-sense back to the budget process," Pombo stated. "Instead of runaway spending, this budget takes surplus money out of Washington and puts it back where it belongs in the first place - to the taxpayers who have been overcharged for years. And, after eight years of tax and spend policies in the White House, we know have a President who will sign the much needed tax relief into law."

The Republican plan will pay off \$2 trillion of the national debt, the maximum that can be repaid without penalty. The plan will also provide needed tax relief for working families. Simultaneously, this plan puts families first by increasing education spending by \$47.5 billion over 10 years, coupling the extra funds with reforms that enhance accountability. The plan calls for innovative reforms of Social Security that will protect the current and those soon-to-be retired. This plan also dedicates \$153 billion over 10 years for Medicare modernization, including a prescription drug benefit.

Foot-and-Mouth not found in North Carolina

As part of a routine foreign animal disease investigation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture can confirm that no cases of foot-and-mouth disease exist in the United States. Tests on tissue samples from swine in Robersonville, NC, with possible FMD-like signs showed no evidence of the disease. Additional tissue samples from the same swine distributor are also being tested as a precaution. USDA, state officials in North Carolina, and other states continue to take every precaution to prevent FMD. This situation illustrates USDA, state agriculture department, and industry's rapid response ability and highlights the cooperation and communication between all involved. All reports of possible foreign animal diseases are taken very seriously. In this state of heightened awareness, ongoing testing for foreign animal diseases, like FMD, should be expected to continue. Each year, USDA receives 300-400 reports of possible foreign animal diseases in the United States. Approximately 100 of these cases are for diseases similar to FMD. It's important to note that many domestic, as well as foreign animal diseases, have similar clinical signs to FMD.

From the United States Department of Agriculture

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Today in History

1822 - Florida became a U.S. territory.

1867 - The U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million dollars.

1870 - The 15th amendment, guaranteeing the right to vote regardless of race, was passed by the U.S. Congress.

1932 - Amelia Earhart became the first woman to make a solo flight across the Atlantic.

1981 - U.S. President Ronald Reagan was shot and wounded in Washington, DC, by John W. Hinkley Jr. Press Secretary James Brady and two police officers were also wounded.

1994 - Serbs and Croats signed a cease-fire to end their war in Croatia while Bosnian Muslims and Serbs continued to fight each other.

From The History of Today

Wordsmith

bu·reau·crat

Pronunciation: 'byur-&-
"krat

Function: *noun*

Date: 1842

: a member of a bureaucracy

Reprinted from the Merriam-Webster Online

Weekly Quote

"The perfect bureaucrat everywhere is the man who manages to make no decisions and escape all responsibility."

- Brooks Atkinson — US drama critic, journalist

Special Energy Report

Final results from the 11th Congressional Energy Poll

Who do you feel is the most responsible for solving the electricity crisis?

Gov. Davis	State Legislature	Fed. Government	Private Utilities	Undecided	Total Polled	Percent Polled
2536	2379	1623	2582	2838	11958	23%
21%	20%	14%	22%	24%		

Are you in favor of or opposed to the state buying the power transmission lines from the private utilities to help the utilities pay off their debt?

Yes	No	Undecided	Total	Percent Polled
2820	5741	1439	10000	19%
28%	57%	14%		

Do you personally believe there is an actual shortage of electricity in California?

Yes	No	Undecided	Total	Percent Polled
2820	5741	1439	10000	19%
28%	57%	14%		

Are you in favor of or opposed to building Nuclear Power Plants in California?

Favor	Opposed	Undecided	Total	Percent Polled
5419	2667	1791	9877	19%
55%	27%	18%		

Are you in favor of or opposed to building the Auburn Dam?

Favor	Opposed	Undecided	Total	Percent Polled
6851	753	2136	9740	
70%	8%	22%		19%

Lawmakers propose \$530 rebate for all families

Republican lawmakers want the state to pay \$530 to every California family to help absorb record electricity rate increases approved this week.

"If ever there was a time to at least give the some interim relief to the people that have to pay these bills, now is the time," said Assemblyman Phil Wyman, R-Tehachapi.

Sen. Tom McClintock, R-Northridge, the bill's author, said it would cost the state about \$5.3 billion, which he believes the government can find by shaving wasteful spending.

"At a time when we are causing families to cut their budgets dramatically, we can do a little belt-tightening of our own," he said.

Gov. Davis spokesman Steve Maviglio said the plan "will never see the light of day."

"It does nothing to address the prices that California is being charged for energy, the solvency of our utilities or the conservation we'll need to get through the summer," he said.

Reprinted from the Associated Press

High hopes for solutions to energy problems

You could say that reality is shining through and political correctness is losing ground, at least in nuclear power. The once dying industry has been revived by the recent power troubles. With rising costs in electricity production, nuclear power plants are seeing a changing attitude. With the ability to operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, they are also insulated from the wildly fluctuating prices of natural gas. There are currently 103 nuclear power plants in the US and it is expected that between 80 and 90 of these plants will seek a renewal of their 20 year licenses in the very near future. Hopefully reality will also shine it's light in hydro-electric...the dreaded dam!

Reprinted from the Washington Times

Special Energy Report cont.

We didn't listen to Nakanishi's advice on energy

When Lodi Mayor Alan Nakanishi campaigned for the state Senate last fall, not enough of us listened to his advice about California's energy problem.

Too many of us in the 5th District may have thought Nakanishi was espousing campaign rhetoric when he said California and energy suppliers like Pacific Gas and Electric Co. were ill-prepared for deregulation in 1996, and the state hasn't ascribed to basic business principles since then. It capped electricity rates and didn't plan for the increased demand by making it profitable for power plants to be built to increase the supply. By getting rid of the rate cap, there would be more energy generated to meet the demand and the price of energy would eventually fall.

As a director of a successful, 95-year-old, city-owned electric company, Nakanishi knew what he was talking about.

If we only had listened.

Lodi Electric Co. is surviving the energy crisis because it has locked in its supply at lower long-term rates. Eighty percent of the city of Lodi's electricity needs is under contracts of 10 to 20 years, and the other 20 percent is under a one-year agreement with plans to extend it to at least another 10 years.

Because of an increase in the price of natural gas for Lodi's power generators and a spike in the price of spot-market electricity, Lodi will spend \$10 million more this year than the \$27 million it budgeted for energy.

To pay for it, Nakanishi didn't seek political cover by supporting a cap on the customer rate that would place the city utility at a financial risk. Instead, he advocated raising electricity bills this spring by 10 to 15 percent to cover the increase. To soften the blow, the city will subsidize up to 20 percent of the cost for those who can't afford the rate hike, and an aggressive conservation program under a tiered-rate system is being implemented. Conserve more, you pay less.

State lawmakers haven't taken similar action, although the Public Utilities Commission is more than hinting it may do so as early as today. Guess it hasn't been good politics. Instead, more than 100 pieces of legislation, or about one new bill a day, dealing with nearly every aspect of the energy crisis have been written. They haven't stopped the bleeding. The state is spending \$45 million every day on behalf of three major suppliers, which are nearly broke because they can't extend the increased energy costs to its customers while there is a rate cap.

Nakanishi's advice is as politically incorrect as it was during the fall campaign: The longer the rate cap remains in place, the more it hurts the rate payer and the taxpayer. Get rid of it and follow Lodi's lead.

If we only had listened, maybe Alan Nakanishi would be in the Legislature and getting something done.

We'll listen next time.

Reprinted from the Tracy Press

What Gov. Davis is doing

*Davis held a news conference Feb. 23 to say he had reached an agreement on a rescue plan with Southern California Edison that included a deal to buy its massive transmission system for \$2.76 billion.

A month later, a top utility executive described the talks as "dreadfully slow." Negotiations over a similar deal with Pacific Gas & Electric, which he said back in February would be completed by now, are even further behind.

* Davis has refused to release details about contracts he signed with independent generators to buy power. He said, however, that the contracts accounted for 6,000 to 7,000 megawatts of electricity this summer, a significant amount that would help protect the state from having to buy much of its power on the far more costly spot market.

* Davis brushed aside reporters' questions last week about the blackouts that rolled across the state. He remained cloistered as the outages continued for a second day, emerging only after they ended to announce a plan to ensure that alternative energy producers would be paid. A week after he called on lawmakers to quickly approve a bill that would help get them paid, the legislation remains stalled.

Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times

No Ebb in Davis' Fund-Raising Power

Gov. Gray Davis was at a Palm Desert country club, raising more than \$100,000 from the health care industry and others last week, at the same time the California PUC acted to exempt hospitals from blackouts.

The Democratic governor's political advisors say he has curtailed his fund-raising schedule, citing demands of the energy crisis. But Davis is still vigorously raising money, more than 20 months before the 2002 general election.

Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times